

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-18 (Cancelled).

19. (Currently amended) A method of casting a component from a metal having a liquidus temperature, comprising **the steps of:**

**a)** providing a die comprising: a first part defining at least part of a die cavity with an external opening; and a second part defining a chamber for housing the first part, the chamber having an opening which is registrable with the external opening of the first part when housed in the second part;

**b)** heating the first part of the die to a temperature above the liquidus temperature of the metal whilst maintaining the second part of the die at a temperature below the liquidus temperature of the metal;

**c)** placing the first part of the die in the chamber of the second part with the chamber opening registered with the external opening of the first part;

**d)** introducing molten metal into the die cavity through the chamber opening;

**e)** solidifying molten metal in the die cavity; **and**

**f)** removing the first part of the die from the second part after solidification, and cooling the first part independently of the second part before removing the solidified component from the first part; **and**

**g) providing a third part corresponding to the first part and repeating the steps (b) to (e) with the third part in place of the first part, wherein molten metal is introduced into the third part whilst cooling the first part independently of the second part.**

Claim 20 (Cancelled).

21. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, further comprising:  
placing a fibre preform into the die cavity prior to introducing molten metal therein;

and

applying with a mechanical compaction piston pressure direct to molten metal  
introduced into the die cavity to encourage infiltration of the fibre preform prior to solidification.

22. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 21, further comprising  
advancing the mechanical compaction piston towards the die cavity when applying pressure to  
molten metal in the die cavity.

23. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 22, in which the  
mechanical compaction piston projects into the die cavity when applying pressure to molten metal  
in the die cavity.

24. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 21, further comprising  
applying pressures in the range 400 bar to 2500 bar to molten metal in the die cavity during  
solidification using the mechanical compaction piston.

Claims 25-30 (Cancelled).

31. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 19, in which the first  
and second parts of the die provided each comprise at least two sections so that each part may be

split open, the method comprising placing the first part in the second part so that sections of one part are configured to separate in a different direction to sections of the other part.